

# Discount Parcels

## Designing Parcels for Automated Processing

# 401a

Quick Service  
Guide

**Related QSGs**    [440a, Standard Mail Irregular and Machinable Parcels](#)  
[450, Parcel Post](#)  
[460, Bound Printed Matter Irregular and Machinable Parcels](#)

**Physical Standards (401)**    Minimum weight: 6 ounces.  
Standard Mail: maximum weight is less than 16 ounces.  
Bound Printed Matter: maximum weight is 15 pounds.  
Parcel Post: maximum weight is 35 pounds (25 pounds for books and other printed matter).  
Dimensions: 6 to 34 inches long, 3 to 17 inches high, and 1/4 to 17 inches thick. Parcels 1/4 inch thick must be at least 3-1/2 inches high and 6 inches long.  
For an overview of the physical standards for discount parcels, see [Quick Service Guide 401](#).

**Eligibility Standards**    Parcels are nonmachinable if they meet any of the criteria in [401.2.3](#). Parcel Post pieces meeting any of the criteria in [401.2.3](#) are subject to a nonmachinable surcharge in addition to postage.  
Barcoded discount: Standard Mail and Package Services (Parcel Post, Bound Printed Matter, Media Mail, and Library Mail) barcoded discount pieces must meet the standards in [708.5.1](#). Parcel barcode may be combined with Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation Service barcode. Standard Mail parcels may include only electronic Delivery Confirmation.  
Parcels eligible for the Standard Mail and Package Services barcoded discount must be prepared with the address and barcode placed squarely onto the largest surface area of the parcel except when the shape and contents require specific orientation for stability during processing. The barcode should be placed immediately adjacent to the delivery address and no closer than 1/2 inch from the edge of the parcel.

**Acceptable Container (601.3)**    Use sturdy materials to withstand handling.  
Size must be adequate to contain items and provide space for cushioning material:  

- Paperboard boxes for easy and average loads up to 10 pounds.
- Metal-stayed paperboard boxes for easy and average loads up to 20 pounds.
- Soft goods in paper or plastic bags and enveloped printed matter up to 5 pounds.
- Avoid waxed or oiled materials, exterior foam boxes, and unsecurely packaged articles.
- Solid corrugated fiberboard boxes as shown below.

Fiberboard Grade	Maximum lb. weight of box and contents		Maximum length & girth in inches
	Easy and avg. loads	Difficult loads	
125	20	—	67
175	40	20	100
200	65	45	108
275	70	65	108
350	—	70	108

**Cushioning (601.4)**    Cushioning absorbs shock and vibration of handling. Combinations of cushioning materials are most effective. Cushion items separately. Examples of cushioning materials: foamed plastics, corrugated fiberboard, loose-fill material, shredded paper, bubble wrap.

**Closure and Sealing (601.4)**

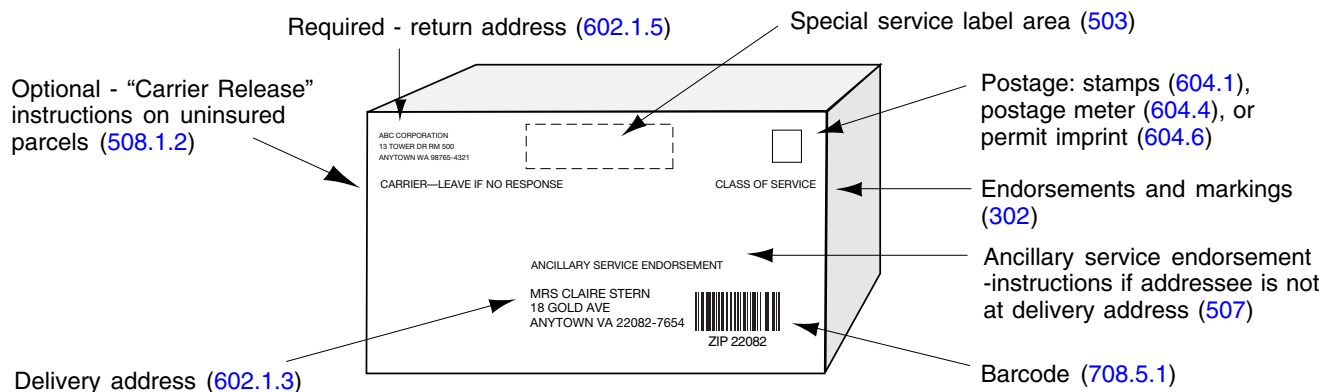
- Except for pressure-sensitive filament tape, tapes used for closure and reinforcement must be at least 2 inches wide.
- Paper tape must be at least 60-pound basis weight.
- Adhesive (glue, paste, thermal plastic, etc.) must be serviceable from -20°F to 160°F.
- Staples and steel stitching acceptable if spaced less than 5 inches apart for easy loads, less than 2-1/2 inches for difficult loads.
- Avoid twine, cord, rope, cellophane tape, and masking tape.

**Mail Preparation**    Parcels must be prepared and marked under applicable standards for machinable parcel preparation:  

- Presorted Standard Mail ([445.5](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 440a](#).
- Parcel Post ([455](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 450](#).
- Bound Printed Matter (465) or [Quick Service Guide 460](#).
- Presorted Media Mail ([475](#)) or [Quick Service Guide 470](#).
- Presorted Library Mail (485).

  
For pallet preparation, see [705.8](#).  
For combined mailings of Standard Mail and Package Services parcels, see [705.6](#).

## Physical Standards for Automation-Compatible Parcels



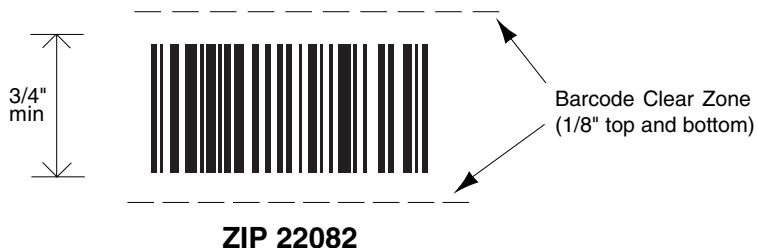
- All information must appear on the same surface.
- Avoid glassine covering address and barcode.

## UCC/EAN Code 128 Barcode

The UCC/EAN Code 128 barcode is required for the Standard Mail and Package Services barcoded discount.

For barcode specifications and placement, see 708.5.1.

If the barcode is printed on the delivery address label and in close proximity to the address, the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code information below the barcode may be omitted. If the barcode is printed on a separate label, the ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code preceded by the word "ZIP" must be printed between 1/8 inch and 1/2 inch below the barcode.



Postal routing codes must meet the technical specifications in the UCC/EAN Code 128; see 708.5.1.

## Packaging and Sealing

**Container** (see front for details):

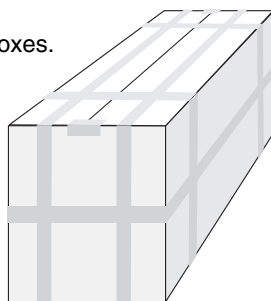
- Sturdy paperboard or fiberboard boxes.
- Plastic or paper bags up to 5 pounds.
- Enveloped printed matter up to 5 pounds.
- Avoid waxed or oiled materials, exterior foam boxes.

**Cushioning:**

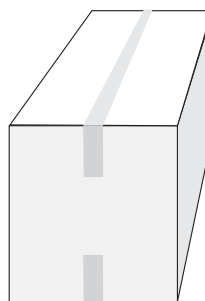
- Cushion items separately.
  - Combine materials for most effectiveness.
- Cushioning materials: foamed plastics, corrugated fiberboard, loose-fill material, and shredded newspapers.

**Sealing** (see front for details):

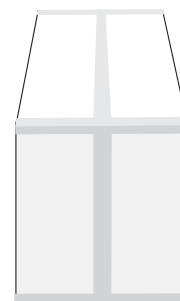
- Pressure-sensitive reinforced tape.
- Reinforced paper tape.
- Staples or steel stitching.
- Adhesive.
- Avoid twine, cord, rope, cellophane tape, and masking tape.



Pressure-sensitive filament tape



Reinforced kraft paper tape



Kraft paper tape